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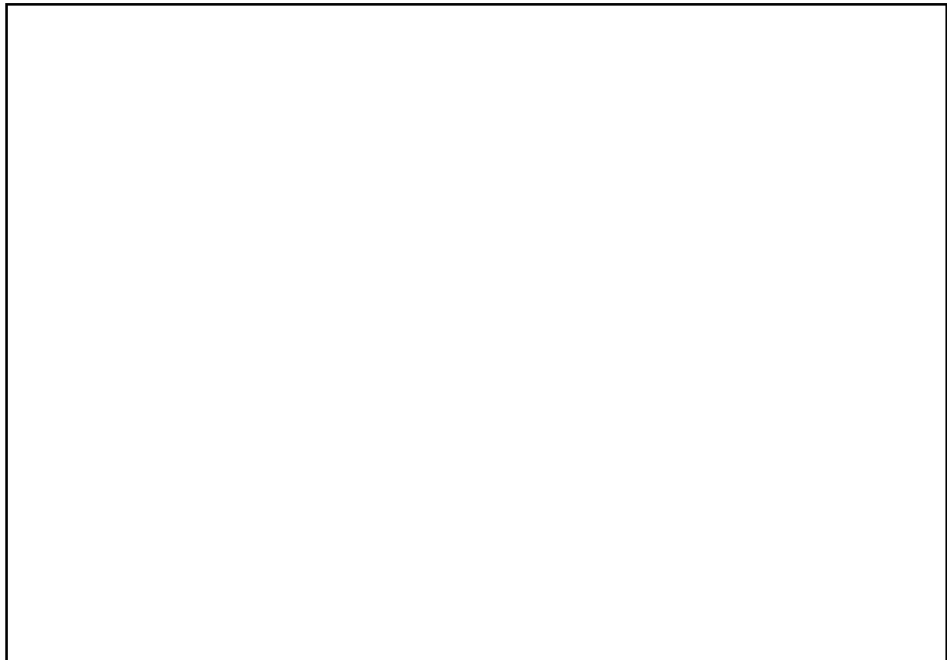
Utah Watershed Review

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Utah's Nonpoint-Source Water-Quality Newsletter

January 2000

Focus: 319 Funding for FY 2000



This should be a watershed year for the Beaver River watershed, which is scheduled to receive more than \$400,000 in EPA Funds. Animalfeeding operations, wuch as the one shown to the right will also receive a lot of money this year.

The Utah Nonpoint Source (NPS) Task Force has been reviewing funding proposals for Section 319 money and has forwarded their recommendations to EPA in Denver for comments.

For the first decade of federal funding of Utah's nonpoint source pollution program, EPA grant amounts stayed about the same each year. Suddenly last year in fiscal year 1999, the federal allocation nationwide nearly doubled. Nearly \$1.5 million in federal funding was distributed to projects in Utah. The fiscal 2000 allocation will be between one and two percent less because of federal holdback for funding special water quality initiatives on Native American tribal land.

The NPS Task Force approve a total of 21 projects for submission to EPA. Most of the money will be spend in priority watersheds on restoration projects. Information and education efforts also received generous funding. A few ground water studies and on-ground demonstration projects in various parts of the state also were approved at the state level for Section 319 money.

The Beaver watershed effort was the big winner this year, receiving approval for \$450,000.

"The anticipated completion of the Coordinated Resource Management

Plan (CRMP) is the major reason their funding increased so much," said Roy Gunnell, Section 319 coordinator, Utah Division of Water Quality.

Chalk Creek also received significant funding to start wrapping up that effort. The recent decision by the local canal companies to support a sprinkler irrigation plan in a section of the drainage will also help the Chalk Creek effort begin to show some significant results. Chalk Creek is slated to get \$380,000 in fiscal year 2000 if EPA approves the proposal.

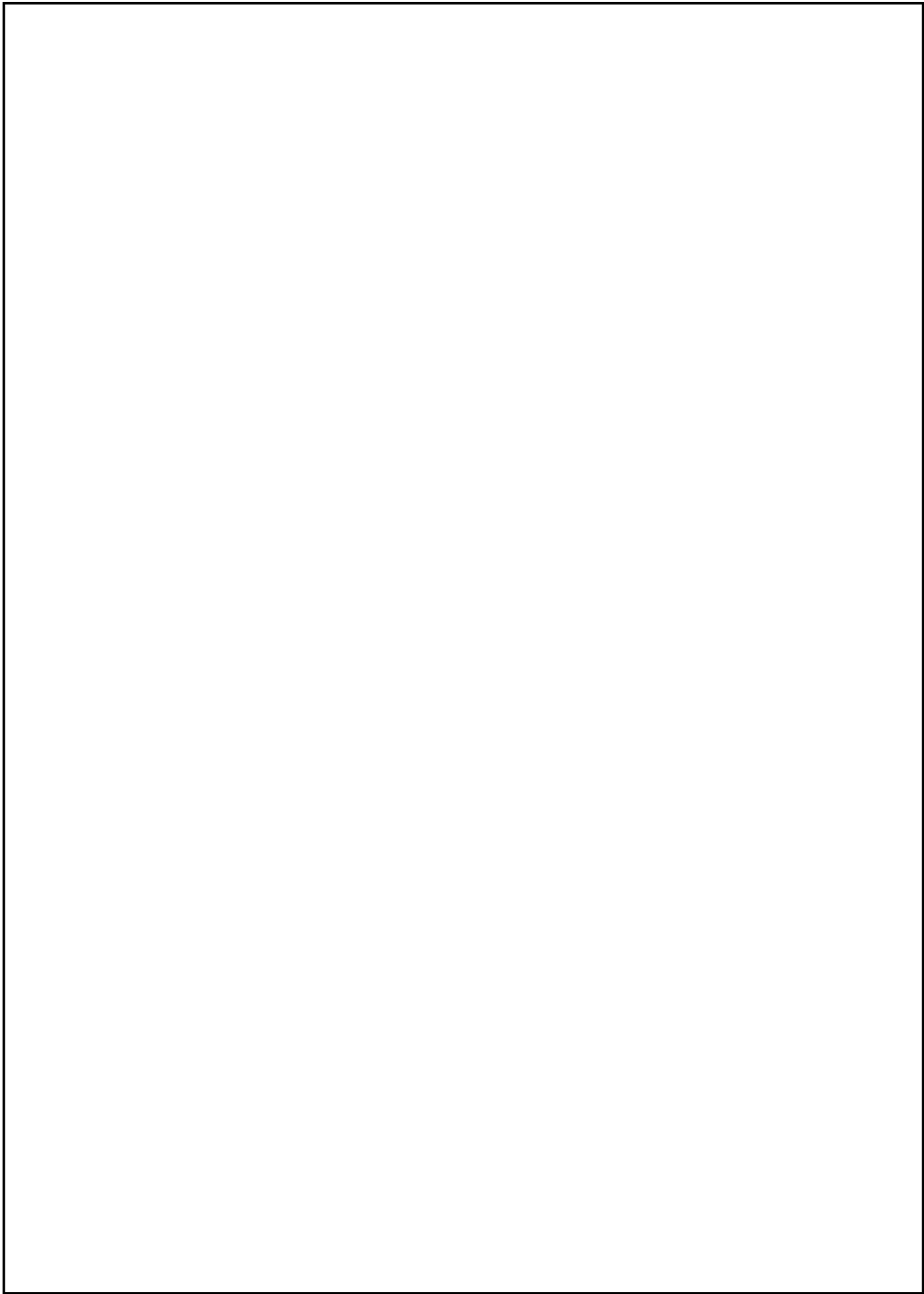
Animal manure management projects will be a big part of individual demonstration projects and watershed efforts. Gunnell said that the Task Force expected to see an increase in animal manure related projects after the approval of the joint national strategy on animal feeding operations last year by EPQA and USDA. Gunnell estimates that about \$500,000 of the total allocation will be used for on-ground and information efforts related to livestock feeding operations.

Other noteworthy allocations include \$80,000 to begin an effort on the Cub River in Northern Utah.

"Once they complete a CRMP up there, the Cub will probably be the

next big watershed effort we fund," concluded Gunnell. He added that a local task force in the Spanish Fork River area is getting ready to start work-

quality specialist and start developing an inventory process to meet requirements of the national animal feeding strategy.



ing on a CRMP, possibly opening the door for future Section 319 priority watershed funding.

The Task Force agreed to fund two studies designed to determine the impacts of septic tank usage. One of the studies will be along Mammoth Creek south of Panguitch. The other is in Emigration Canyon in Salt Lake County.

Finally, Gunnell said, he is excited about the allocation of \$84,400 in Section 319 money to the Utah Farm Bureau Federation to help hire a water

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Feds Axe Jordan Restoration Project in South Jordan

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) pulled the plug in December on an ambitious river restoration plan along the Jordan River through the City of South Jordan. According to a FWS representative, the City of South Jordan failed to follow through on its commitments.

The termination means that 111 acres of historic floodplain along the river between 10600 South and 112000 South will not be restored as a preserve for migratory birds and other wildlife.

About \$1.2 million in federal funds had already been spent on the restoration project, and \$650,000 more was available to complete the work.

“We’re going to have to cut the cord and move on,” said Elise Peterson, an FWS ecologist and project manager for the river restoration project in South Jordan.

Peterson said city officials appear to favor development over conservation along the river bottoms, making it impossible for the agency and other partners in the project to do any meaningful restoration there.

South Jordan leaders have not made any official comment about FWS’s actions as of time of publication.

According to Peterson, the agency’s decision to end its relationship with the city is based on many factors. Last year, largely to help expedite an office development on the west side of the river, the city rezoned a chunk of land on both sides of the river from agriculture to commercial, increasing the value of the land.

The increase in price put about 17 acres of the targeted lands “out of the ballpark of affordability” for environmental groups and a federal agency that wanted to buy the land for conservation purposes

The federal Utah Reclamation Mitigation and Conservation Commission, a cooperating agency in the restoration, eventually provided \$1 million to buy those 17 acres.

The investment by the commission was contingent, however, on a written promise by the city to help realize the wildlife preserve, said Mike Weland, director of the commission.

The city told Weland it would buy \$1 million of land elsewhere in the area targeted for restoration.

However, the city since refused to sign conservation easements that would ensure the land’s long-term protection from development, and has proposed placing part of a golf course on some of the city-acquired lands in the restoration project.

“A golf course does not provide anywhere near the diversity of habitat that the wildlife preserve was intended to

provide,,” said Weland

Plans for the gold course came as a shock to Jan Tobias, a community activist who has fought the office development on the west side of the river.

Weland and Peterson said they feel the city has not kept its commitments. They commission’s \$1 million land investment, as well as \$200,000 the FWS has spent for design and preliminary vegetation plantings are all for naught, they said.

“We’re disappointed,” said Peterson. “This was a very good project that would have provided significant benefits for the river’s natural resources.. We worked very hard and did a lot of compromising to maintain the project. We can’t compromise anymore.”

Desptie this apparent failure in South Jordan, other cities are taking the concept to heart.

Murray City started incorporating wetland and habitat restoration into its river parkway a decade ago, and West Jordan recently embarked on a major effort with the federal government to restore the river’s historic meanders and 40 acres of wtelands.

Animal Feeding Operation Strategy Workshops are being Offered Around the State

With all the interest and concern that the national strategy on aminal feeding operations has generated during the past year, Utah State University and several partner agencies and groups have teamed up to hold 13 local workshops around the state during january, February and March. What follows is a list of dates and cities where the workshops will take place. Please contact the USU extension agent in your area for more details about the meetings. The workshops are being offered free of charge.

Jan 12	Beaver
Jan 13	Manti
Jan 14	Richfield
Feb 2	Provo
Feb 14	Price
Feb 15	Roosevelt
Feb 16	Summit/Morgan
Feb 17	Rich County
Feb 29	Ogden
March 9	Panguitch
March 10	Cedar City

Circle Four Okayed to Keep W.Q. Permit

The state water quality permit that allowed Circle Four Farms to significantly expand its giant hog production factory in southwestern Utah last year will remain intact.

Following a two-day hearing in early December, the Utah Water Quality Board voted 7-1 to uphold a permit issued in January 1998 by the Utah Division of Water Quality.

But the board also suggested that state regulators, perhaps even the Legislature, should do more to prod the corporate hog industry into developing a more environmentally protective way to dispose of the vast amounts of manure produced by the large hog farms.

Currently, the “best available technology,” as it is known in the regulatory requirements, is anaerobic lagoons.

In this system, pig feces and urine are flushed from the barns into two giant lagoons, one of which is used to evaporate the liquids and the other to break down the solids through the slow biological process of anaerobic decomposition.

The division made a “reasonable effort” to determine the best available technology, said board member K.C. Shaw, an engineer for Geneva Steel. But he added that the board should encourage advances in technology.

That statement and similar ones made by a state attorney and other board members came as a consolation prize to the loser in this case, Citizens for Responsible and Sustainable Agriculture (CRSA), a Ceder City-based group that challenged Circle Four’s latest permit.

“The board is much better informed now on issues involving swine waste,” said CRSA attorney Bruce Plank.

Though CRSA had wanted a revocation or modification of Circle Four’s permit, he backed away from that position in his closing.

Water Quality Division Starts TMDL Section

With the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) pushing states to develop total maximum daily load (TMDL) plans for all navigable waters within the next few years, The Utah Division of Water Quality (DWQ) recently started a new TMDL section, hired a section manager and five TMDL development coordinators to write specific water pollution reduction plans.

The top goal of the section is to develop water pollution control and reduction strategies for impaired waters throughout the state. These strategies, known as TMDLs, determine which pollutant(s) within a drainage exceed the total maximum daily amount that can be discharged into the water without violating water quality standards.

The new section is comprised of five program specialists and a supervisor.

Longtime DWQ employee Harry Judd was hired to supervise the staff. Along with his new duties, Judd continues to serve as the Clean Lakes Coordinator for the state.

Also in the section are John Whitehead, Mark Pearson, Dave Wham, Mike Allred and Carl Adams.

Each member of the staff has been assigned a region of the in which to concentrate his efforts. The assignments are as follows:

John Whitehead is working on the Weber River Basin and Lower Colorado River Basin; Dave Wham is concentrating his fforts on the Jordan River Basin and the Great Salt Lake Desert/Columbia Basin; Mark Pearson is working in the Western Colorado River Basin and the Sevier River Basin; Mike Allred is looking at the Bear River Basin and the Doutheastern Colorado River Basin; and Carl Adams is concentrating on the Uinta Basin and the Cedar/Beaver Basin. For more information call the Utah Division of Water Quality, 801 538-6146

Utah Watershed Review

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2000 Utah Non Point Source Water Quality Conference

Logan, Utah—Eccles Conference Center, Utah State University

July 18-20, 2000

Non point source pollution affects every portion of a watershed, from the farmer's fields to suburban streets. Changing population bases and evolving water quality rules and regulations are impacting the ways rural communities, larger cities, counties and the state tackle non point source water quality problems.

The first Utah Non Point Source Pollution Water Quality Conference of the new millennium will focus on "Water Quality from the City to the Farm." The three-day conference will consist of one daylong tour of water quality points of interest in the Cache Valley and two days of conference sessions. The meeting days are scheduled to focus on topics including concentrated animal feeding operations, including a look at best management practices and management strategies offered by federal and state agencies; storm water management, specifically focussing on the Clean Water Act Phase II requirements and implementation; and septic tank use in a changing landscape.

Each meeting day will include concurrent session presentations. The Utah NPS Task Force conference planning committee is currently accepting abstracts for concurrent session presentations

Presentations will be 30 minutes long, including time for questions and answers. Presentations may be about any non point source pollution-related issue. However, particular consideration will be given to those topics that closely relate to the general session topics of animal manure management, septic tank use, and storm water management.

Abstracts should be one page if possible. Please use the following formatting guidelines:

Type should be 12pt Times or Times New Roman.

Single-spaced type between lines of the same paragraph. Double space between paragraphs.

Presentation title should be in Bold and Centered on the page.

The name(s) of the main presenters should appear at the top of the page below the title but above the body of text.

Deadline for submission: February 15, 2000

Submit To:

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2000 NPS Conference Returns to Original Format

Topics to Include Animal Feeding Operation and Storm Water Requirements

The 2000 Utah Non Point Source Water Quality Conference will mark the return of the event to the Utah State University campus and a return to the more traditional conference format.

The past two years the conference has changed its format a bit to accomodate some special opportunities.

In 1998 in Richfield, the conference consisted of two days of tours and one day of meetings. The 1999 event held in Ogden, had three days of tours and training opportunities and no real conference sessions. For 2000, the original format of two days of conference meetings and one tour day has returned.

The theme for this year is "Water quality from the city to the farm." Specific topics of general sessions will center around concentrated animal feeding operations, septic tanks, and stormwater

regulations.

The two days of conference meetings will consist of both general sessions and concurrent paper presentations. Above is a copy of the cal for papers being mailed out in early January.

Phase II of the Clean Water Act stormwater regulations went into effect in November, affecting an additional 50 or more communities in Utah. The additional burden upon these cities and towns to control urban runoff. Most communities will use of combination of public education to reduce pollution and structural methods to control and reduce pollution.

As Utah becomes more urbanized, septic tank use is becoming a big issue. Wasatch County has been wrestling with septic tank density for some years now. Other cities and counties will soon have

a similar dilemma. Some of the questions facing these communities related to septic tank use include acceptable lot size and housing and septic tank density.

Finally, the more agricultural issue of animal feeding operations and manure management is no less important to the water quality of the state.

In March 1998 the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of Agriculture jointly released a strategy related to concentrated animal feeding operations and manure management. This strategy is part of the mandated within the Clean Water Act to keep pollution out of navigable waters of the U.S.

While the strategy is a good idea by most accounts, it has caused some confusion and even panic among livestock operations and dairies in Utah and

throughout the country.

Conference sessions surrounding this issue will hopefully answer many of the confusing questions. Speakers are expected to address the inventory process, inspection schedule, permit process, how to write a comprehensive nutrient management plan and possible best management practices for dealing with pollutants.

In the months to come, this publication will advertise the agenda and registration materials. A mailer with those materials will also be in the mail by spring 2000.

Niche Markets Can Save Some Family Farms

Farming has gone through many changes in past 100 years. As a new century and millennium approach even more changes are probably in store.

Speaking recently to the annual convention of the Utah Association of Conservation Districts, sustainable agriculture expert Dr. Phillip V. Rassmussen, Utah State University, suggested that niche markets are the way for many farmers and ranchers to stay economically viable in the 21st Century. According to Rassmussen, niche markets could mean producing and marketing a whole new product or simply devising a new method of marketing an existing product.

One case in point is Larry Thompson, a berry producer in Boring Oregon. Thompson was feeling the pressure of rapid growth around his farm on all sides. He was also struggling to stay profitable with his berry production. Then he started to advertise type and amount of fertilizers and pesticides he used. He also disclosed when he applied agricultural chemicals.

He started taking his crops to the local farmers' market. Using his new disclosure marketing technique, Thompson's business mushroomed.

Another example comes from Hawaii, where Susan Matsushimi bought a defunct dairy farm and started raising orchid and pineapple starts to send home with tourists.

Other examples include organic wheat grown in New Mexico and organic milk produced in California, and Corn fields turned autumn time amusement areas called corn mazes that are popping up all over the country.

Here in Utah a niche agricultural market has been exploited by a suburban wife and mother from Utah County who has nothing to do with agricultural production. Cow-pie clocks are the biggest marketing sensations since the pet rock in the 70s. But unlike the pet rock, the cow-pie clock does something functional.

As the name implies, the recipe for building a cow-pie clock is rather simple. Take a clock mechanism and insert it into a dried, varnished piece of cow manure. Before you push aside this publication thinking how disgusting and repulsive the idea of a cow-pie clock is, consider that at \$39.95 to \$49.95, the lady is rolling in it—money that is.

Kristen Murdock admits that some people see her creations and think she is sick. Those same people usually place an order a moment or two later, she adds.

Each cow-pie clock comes with a display stand and a saying attached such as "A chip off the old clock," You dung

good," You are heaven scent," or "You're outstanding in your field."

This now booming business all started one day when Murdock was hiking in a canyon near Lake Powell. As she walked she came across some old cow pies and was fascinated by them. She sealed a few in plastic bags and took them home with her, without any idea about what she would do with them. Then it occurred to her that a clock might look good in them.

After trying several glazes to harden the cow pies and make them shine, she found a marine vanish that seemed to work.

At first she made a few clocks and gave them to friends and relatives as gifts. When one of her relatives passed on a clock to a friend, entertainer Donny Osmond, the cow pie hit the fan.

A few weeks later Osmond displayed Murdock's creation on his talk show and her hobby officially transformed into a business.

Murdock says she has sold hundreds of pies since becoming a business in January 1999. She goes to southern Utah about every three weeks to gather the raw product for her clocks. She says that the pies in the north are too wet.

Now that's value added agriculture using a niche market.

Two Federal Studies Confirm that Utah has Growing Urban Population

Census Bureau Says Utah Number 2 Fastest Growing State

Separate reports issued by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Census Bureau confirm that housing and other growth is replacing Utah's valuable farm and ranch land at increasing rates.

The U.S. Census Bureau says that Utah is the second fastest growing state in the country for housing units. That reports follows a USDA study showing Utah is losing its farmland to development at twice the previous rate.

The Census Bureau reports that Nevada, Utah and Idaho are leading the nation in housing growth. The Bureau ranks Nevada's nearly 48 percent jump in housing from 1990 to 1998 as the largest increase in the nation. Utah is ranked second with a 22.1 percent increase during those eight years. Idaho is ranked 3rd at 21.8 percent.

Those new homes are going up on America's best farmland, as the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service reports that the nation's agricultural land is being developed at rates double those of the past. Both reports are available on the Worldwide Web at "usda.gov" and census.gov/estimates/housing/sthuhh3.txt"

This is a confirmation of what we've been seeing for several years," said Utah Commissioner of Agriculture and Food, Cary G. Peterson. "For every farm that is covered by rooftops and blacktop, Utah consumers become more dependent on imported food," he said.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's 1997 National Resources Inventory shows that America is losing 3 million acres of agricultural or forest land each year to development, that's twice as fast as in the previous ten years.

Utah's yearly development rate has also doubled. Between 1992 and 1997, 21,020 acres were developed each year compared with 10,690 acres developed each year between 1982 and 1992. Utah's national ranking of 39 is down from 35, the previous ranking.

Efforts to Protect Farmland

In the past few years Utah has taken important steps to protect its prime farmland. Commissioner Peterson acknowledges more must be done. The 1999 Utah Legislature created the Quality Growth Commission to identify and protect important open space. Peterson is a primary member of that commission.

The legislature also has funded the Utah Department of Agriculture and Food's Critical Resource Land Conservation Committee, which is chaired by Peterson. The committee has identified

five agricultural land protection projects for funding. The committee would purchase easements or development rights as a means to keep land in agricultural production.

"Our citizens are becoming more aware of the importance of protecting our farmland as a means to protect our heritage and our self sufficiency," Peterson said.

Peterson is nearing agreements with farmland owners in Davis and Cache counties to protect more than 100 acres of productive farmland. One parcel sits near the Great Salt Lake and is part of a family farm that produces high value vegetables. The second parcel is located in Cache County and would help ensure the viability of several nearby farms.

Private non-profit groups in the state have made the largest gains in protecting Utah farmland. Two groups, The Nature Conservancy has protected more than 260,000 acres of Utah Farm and ranchland, and Utah Open Lands preserved just over 19,000 acres. Both groups continue to actively work to protect open land throughout Utah.

Are We Less Interested in the Environment?

In a time when Americans seem to be doing more than ever to protect the environment, interest in government regulations designed to protect the environment seems to be waning.

A poll conducted recently by Wirthlin Worldwide indicates that 57 percent of Americans say there's enough, or even too much, government regulation of the environment, while 42 percent say there is too little.

These numbers are down some from similar polls conducted earlier in the 90s. Between 1994 and 1997, over 70 percent of the public supported "environmental protection at any cost," the report states.

This double digit drop in interest in regulation does not necessarily mean that fewer Americans are interested in the environment.

"We're not seeing that the concern for the environment has gone down," said Maury Giles, research manager for the local office of Wirthlin Worldwide. He said the less interest in regulation may be the result of positive improvements in the environment in general in the past several years. Giles cites the removal of the Bald Eagle and other high-profile species from endangered lists as some of the environmental victories.